

Members of the committee,

My name is Brendon Field, I am a high school senior from New Hartford, and I am in opposition of Bill #6380. The reason for my opposition of the proposed bill is the clause in which the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, or BESB, will be consolidated in to two divisions with the Children's Service division being relocated to the State Department of Education. I have been a member of BESB and a beneficiary of its programs my entire life. BESB has allowed me to excel as a student and an individual. In school, they have provided me with services including enlarged textbooks, Para professionals and visionary aid technology. They constantly worked to make sure that I had all necessary services. If these programs had not been administered, I stood no chance of having a successful academic career. Outside of school, they establish programs that greatly aid myself and other students in our physical and social abilities. Programs such as LIFE, College Day and Camp Abilities which aids students in mobility and daily living skills in categories such as transportation, cooking and shopping. Programs such as the Student Advisory Council taught us communication and social skills, as well gave as opportunities to work with other impaired children. Their programs have given me work ethic, leadership abilities, a social life, a paycheck, independence and self confidence, and an enormous appreciation for the life I live. It is because of BESB that I grown into a mature and capable individual. It is because of

BESB that I have successfully completed my high school education and will soon be a student at the University of Connecticut. It is because of BESB that I am ready for the life awaits me when I reach adulthood.

If the Board of Education and Services for the Blind is to be split: programs will be cut, funds will be stiffened, communication will falter and breakdown, processes will be slowed and people will be forgotten. The progress BESB makes on people's lives will not be as effective and the blind community of the State of Connecticut will suffer.

I am a man of logic, and logic has taught me that a system works best when it is kept as a whole. When a necessary component or function is removed or rendered unable to work to its fullest ability, the system suffers and adaptations must be made. These adaptations are difficult and time. A system that I'm sure we all can relate to, is the human body. I, as well as all of my visually impaired associates are living examples of a system that have unwillingly suffered these consequences. I now plead to the members of the Connecticut Legislature, do not pass bill #6380 and BESB as one functioning agency.